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JOHN R. MOTT—CHRISTIAN STATESMAN

BY FRANK B. LENZ, New York

IT HAS been said that every man has his adjective—but not so John R. Mott. It would be difficult to circumscribe him by grammar, rhetoric or epithets. Physically and morally he is large and straight and square. He is distinctly American with the evidence in his face of concentration, poise, peace, strength and earnestness. When in action there is no room to doubt the determination and will power of the man. Great physical strength and energy are revealed in his movements. He commands others because he has conquered himself and because he himself has learned to obey a higher Power.

Everyone realizes that he cannot be labeled or confined within sectarian limits. It is enough to say that he is a Christian and is loyal to Christ and His Church universal and so might be termed an "Ecumenical Christian." He deals habitually with intellectual, moral and spiritual esentials, and in that sense he might be called an "essentialist," rather than a "modernist" or "fundamentalist."

John R. Mott cannot be explained by analyzing his great administrative, intellectual and organizing abilities. There is a spiritual dynamic about him that brings things to pass. His greatest purpose in life is to discover and do the will of God.

Mott is a prodigious worker. Whether at home or in the office, on the sea or in the subway, he is busy toward purposeful ends. Yet he works without manifesting hurry or worry or impatience. So completely does he lose himself in the causes of Christ that he takes no thought of time, space or handicaps. Problems exist to be solved. Crisis exist to be transcended.

He has frequently said that when a man lacks world-conquering power it is because he has been conquered by the world and not by Christ. In one of his addresses he says:

> Come to Christ for the particular thing you need. Is it cleansing? He will make you clean. Are you depressed and discouraged? He will plant new hope in your breast. Are you weak? He will give you energy. Let Him flood your life, flood it, flood it, that you may say, "It is not I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me." Let us rise in newness of life.

One of the remarkable characteristics of Mott is his ability to change men's attitudes from opposition and hostility to one of confidence and hearty support. This can best be explained by spiritual influence rather than on human grounds. Men's hearts are stirred by his appeals and their wills respond so that they are ready to follow his leadership.

"Mott is earnest and able, but he will never make a speaker," said Richard C. Morse, General Secretary of the International Committee of the Association about the time the young Cornell graduate joined his staff. Today, forty years later, while he makes no pretense to eloquence and rhetoric, he is unique for his ability to electrify an audience. While he never seeks

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merely to entertain his hearers, the deep, vibrant qualities of his voice, his poise and dignity, his choice of words and staccato sentences and his commanding grasp of the subject, compel attention. He shows this power even when speaking through an interpreter on his extended foreign tours.

Mott is recognized as a masterful presiding officer. At the World's Convention of the Young Men's Christian Association, which met at Helsingfors, Finland, in 1926, he handled that audience of fifteen hundred delegates from fifty-two nations, day after day, with such superb skill and fairness that the meetings ended without a ripple and on schedule time. Thorough preparation, great attention to details and the selection of wise and capable associates are keys to the success of the conferences and assemblies over which he presides.

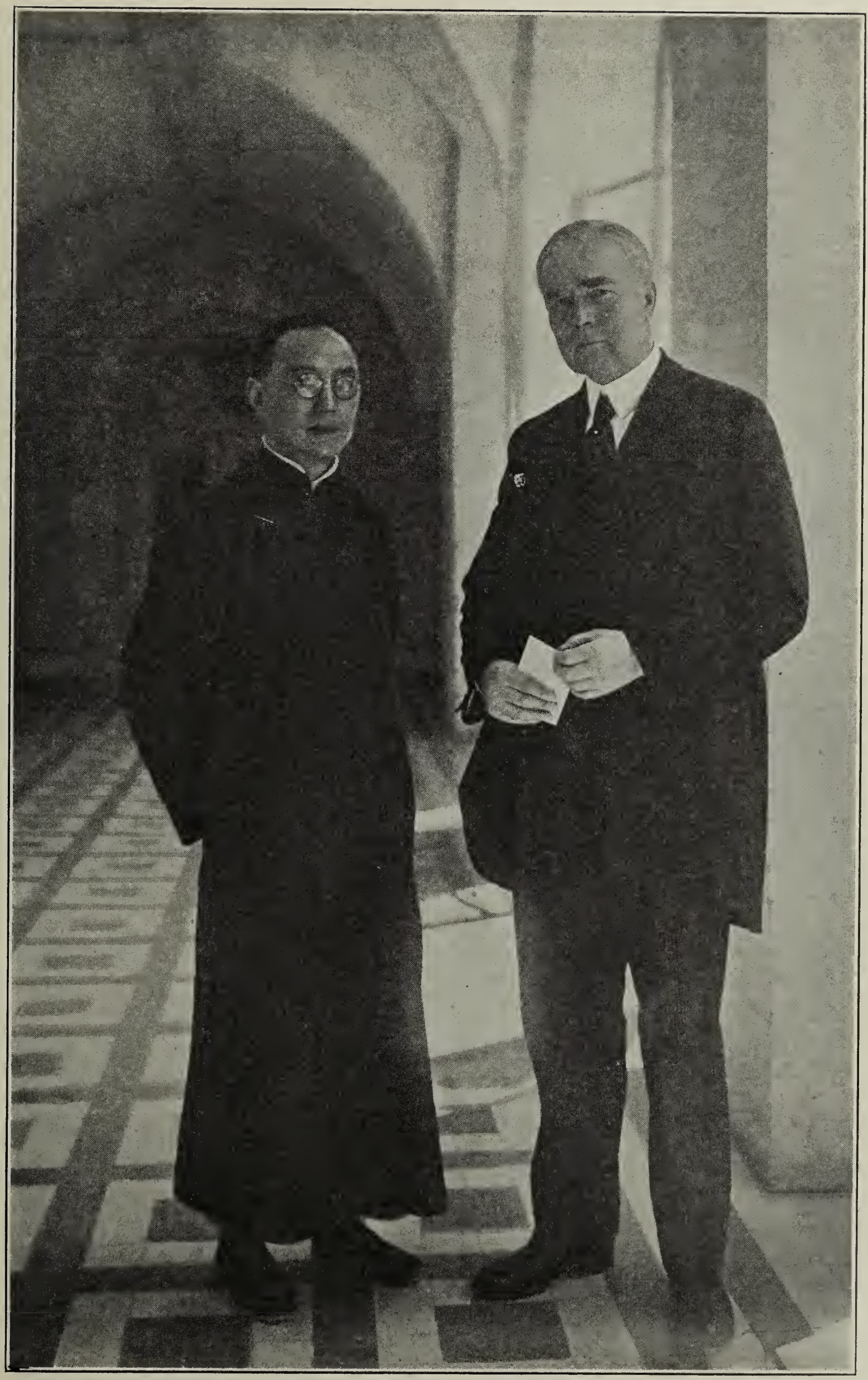
While Mott is not noted for his humor and does not have time to spend in telling jokes, those who know him intimately know well his keen relish for good stories, and his own ability to tell them.

Mott and Money

One of the significant contributions that Mott has made to Christian progress is through his ability to convince men and women of social standing and large wealth, that it is worth while for them to invest large sums in great causes that will continue to bear fruit long after he and they are gone. The offerings which he recommends are not wild cat stocks, but "gilt edge" investments that build character, that bind together the races, nations and classes and that promote the Kingdom of God among men. He challenges people to give not paltry sums but large and sacrificial offerings. No one knows the number of millions he has raised for Christian work. He has helped to lift giving from the level of a small, begging appeal to a dignified plane that commands the respect and confidence of the donor. Dedicated money is as imperative and as sacred as dedicated lives. If rightly used money is as truly a means of bringing in the Kingdom of God as preaching the Word of God. It is characteristic of Mott, that before asking for a gift he takes great pains in preparing the case thoroughly and spends much time in prayer before presenting it. Money raising for Christian enterprises may be regarded as an important and highly spiritual religious activity. Many of John R. Mott's best friends are those who have given him the largest sums over a period of years. Scores of donors have testified to the sacramental effect that their gifts have had on their own lives. The motive that animates the appeal and the purpose for which the money is used determine the character of the effort. Mott believes in sacrificial giving not, "until it hurts," but "until it feels good."

Mott in Print

A large collection of books, documents, magazine articles, and pamphlets, have come from the mind and heart and pen of John R. Mott in the past forty years. Many of these are of a high order and of enduring value. The burning, vital messages have deeply impressed and moved large numbers in many lands. "Confronting Young Men with the Living Christ" or that striking pamphlet, "The Price of Leadership" (written over twenty years ago), will convince any reader that they were



DR. JOHN R. MOTT AND DR. DAVID Z. T. YUI AT JERUSALEM, MARCH, 1928

the product of no ordinary individual.

In all of his books there are passages which reveal wide vision and strength and character. Many of his volumes have been translated into other languages and are distributed widely, especially in the great university centers.*

War Work

As noble men of God in the monasteries of Europe kept the flame of the Christian religion alive during the Dark Ages, so other noble followers of Christ endured the trials of the arena of conflict and made Christ real in the midst of the appalling lusts and hatreds of the World War. It was heartrending to see the best manhood of the nations, march into the fiery furnace. Character was needed that would not burn or die, but this seemed almost impossible. Mott carried a cross day and night during those terrible years, but under his leadership were mobilized and intensified the moral and physical forces of the enlisted men. From the war zone he returned to America and asked for $170,000,000 for the United War Work Campaign. The response was $205,000,000, given because men and women knew the awful consequences if their loved ones at the front and in camp were not surrounded by some decencies and restraints of civilization. To keep men and boys from going to physical and moral distruction during the reactions following the terrors of battle, millions of dollars were contributed for work in debarkation camps, naval stations, rest billets and prison camps. Mott led this gigantic movement to hold men up to the best, and to help make righteousness prevail. As head of the United War Work campaign, he devoted an energy and determination that was almost alarming to some of his associates.

The Christian religion was enlisted and was one of the few forces to return to usefulness. It was not submerged or destroyed, and the Y. M. C. A., with the help of a group of noble American laymen, was one of the chief agencies that kept religion functioning. This and other organizations acted as the good Samaritan among forty nations at a time when passion was enthroned, and in the midst of those years of pain, suffering and sorrow. As an expression of appreciation of the service rendered on behalf of the American soldiers and sailors, as well as the men of the allied armies and prisoners of war, the United States Government gave Dr. Mott a Distinguished Service medal, the French Government made him Knight of the Legion of Honor, and the Italian Government conferred upon him the Order of the Italian Crown.

Influence on Youth

For forty years Mott has helped to keep the attention of the world riveted on youth. As international student secretary for the Christian Association he repeatedly circled the globe to push an aggressive campaign of evangelism among students in the great university centers of Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. He was one of the early student volunteers for Foreign Missions and for years he actively shared in the development

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* Among his books are: "Strategic Points of the World's Conquest," "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation," "Christians of Reality," "The Pastor and Modern Missions," "The Future Leadership of the Church," "The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions," "The Present World Situation," "The World's Christian Federation" and "Confronting Young Men with the Living Christ."

of that movement. Later he conceived the idea of the World Student Christian Federation, and became one of its founders at Vadstena Castle, Sweden, 1895. Students all over the world were thus united under the banner of Christ and the influence of the Federation has become so far-reaching that at present its work embraces more than forty countries, over 3,000 colleges and universities and a membership of 300,000. In recognition of his work for students, Yale University conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts thirty years ago.

Repeatedly Mott has said: "I have learned to trust youth." Since the globe has become his parish he has learned to trust them whatever their color, race or nationality. One of the most statesmanlike things he ever did was to establish a committee to promote friendly relations among foreign students studying in America. He also had a large part in launching the notable work of the Interracial Commission which promotes better racial understanding between white people and the Negroes throughout the United States.

Curiously enough as Mott grew older he came to see more clearly the strategic importance of Christian work with boys and he turned his attention vigorously to strengthening the Association's program among those of the teen age. With characteristic emphasis he said: "Let us go into towns and villages; into our cities and rural districts, with a living appreciation of the transcendent importance of getting hold of the boys. Let us all have a hand in this highly multiplying work—that of relating boys in their plastic years, their vision-forming years, their ideal-determining years, their habit-forming years—to the ever living Christ."

DELEGATES AT THE HELSINGFORS YOUTH CONFERENCE IN FINLAND, 1926

The Kingdom of God First

Gifted with qualities that would have made him a great statesman, educator, jurist, editor or business man, John R. Mott has turned a deaf ear to the many appeals that would remove him from the field of distinctive Christian work. When he was a student at Cornell, more than forty years ago, he made a decision that completely changed the course of his life. One evening, coming in late at a crowded student meeting where the famous Cambridge University cricketer, J. E. K. Studd, was speaking, he heard the following words: "Seekest thou great things for thyself; seek them not." He heard little more, but this text led to a great soul struggle which resulted in his decision to turn his back on the law, the profession for which he was preparing. From that day he has done everything within his power to strengthen the Church of Christ and build the Kingdom of God on earth. To prove his loyalty to the new purpose to which he dedicated his life, Mott has refused business offers that would have given him a large income; he has also declined college presidencies and could not be persuaded to accept the high office of American Minister to the Republic of China which President Wilson urged him to consider.

"A man cannot be a Christian alone," he has repeatedly maintained as he has urged men and boys to avail themselves of the privileges of the church and to take up the responsibilities. Through him thousands of men have thus been led to dedicate their lives to the Christian ministry at home or abroad. The Association has been recognized as "an arm of the church" or "the Church's auxiliary" not as an independent organization.

Dr. Mott's devotion to the cause of Christ, above all other causes, is illustrated by an incident that occurred a few years ago on a visit to Manila that lasted only thirty hours but was historic. He addressed a convocation at the University of the Philippines one afternoon, when the grandstand on the athletic field was filled with students and members of the faculty, and hundreds more were standing on either side of the platform. His subject was "Christ, as our hope in overcoming temptations." It was an unusual address for a convocation of the University but the students were very responsive. He impressed all who heard him as being on the Lord's business and not his own.

In International Affairs

Theodore Roosevelt described Mott as a man who had rendered most consistent, useful and disinterested service in the United States and in many other countries. Chief Justice Taft has said: "There is no one of the present day who has a greater world vision of promoting the better side of all men and more experience in fitting him to do so than Dr. Mott. Leaders in centers of influence the world over are familiar with his capacity and genius. This has made him a great agent in the progress of civilization."

When the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him at Princeton University in 1911, he was characterized as "a devisor of national and international agencies" and as "a traveler over four continents in search of room for work." Twice he was sent on political missions by President Wil-

son who regarded him "as one of the most useful men in the world." In 1916 he was a member of the American and Mexican Joint Commission to settle the difficulties between the two countries and in 1917 he was a member of the Special Diplomatic Mission to Russia, headed by Elihu Root.

He has been decorated many times, for the distinctive services he has rendered. In addition to those already mentioned, he has received the Imperial Order of Meiji of Japan, the Order of Polonia Restituta of Poland, the Order of the Saviour of Greece, the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem and the Second Order of the Crown of Siam. He is probably acquainted personally with more crowned heads and leaders of State than any other living American. It has been said that before the war, he knew every prime minister in Europe.

Where in the history of Christian work, has any other man held five positions of major importance simultaneously? Dr. Mott has, at the same time, held the unique distinction of being president of the World's Alliance of the Young Men's Christian Associations, Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation, Chairman of the International Missionary Council, General Secretary of the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States, and Chairman of the Institute of Social and Religious Research. For some years he was also Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Student Volunteer Movement and very active in the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Any one of these positions would tax the capacities of an ordinary man.

Foreign Misssion Activity

The foreign work of the Young Men's Christian Association received its chief stimulus in the beginning from him. Its aim was to establish self-supporting and self-propogating associations in the strategic cities of foreign lands under native leadership. A network of modern buildings which serve as demonstration centers all over the world testify to the success of the enterprise.

Mott's activity in the missionary enterprise and his influence in organizing Christian forces in all lands led to his being regarded as one of the most constructive religious geniuses since John Wesley. His ability to unify and coordinate disorganized and unrelated forces has resulted in effecting large economy, in the reduction of overlapping, and in the minimizing of national and denominational friction.

The World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 was planned to develop a program of closer cooperation and unity among all evangelical churches. Mott at forty-five was chairman of the conference which brought together 1,200 delegates from all over the world. His work was so noteworthy that the University of Edinburgh conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. even before the convention was called to order. This conference ended the policy of separate action on the part of mission societies in their approach to the world task. Out of the conference there sprang a Continuation Committee, which "advanced by great strides the cause of international cooperation." As chairman of this committee, Dr. Mott drew together in area after area, national missionary councils, both

in "sending" and in "receiving" countries. Those in China, Japan, India, North Africa and Eastern Asia and Latin America, by the incorporation of the indigenous churches, became National Christian Councils. These in turn were united in a great new organization —the International Missionary Council, which last April closed its remarkable sessions at Jerusalem.

A Great New Task

Recently Mott has resigned as General Secretary of the Association movement in the United States, but it is not that he may seek rest and settle down in the stuffy atmosphere of the study to reminisce about the past. He has resigned to make way for youth in a youth movement. Having taken this step he does not hover around to become "Chairman of the Board" but he has already started on a tour of India in connection with his important duties as Chairman of the International Missionary Council—a task of such urgent character as to require the exercise of all his powers. He firmly believes that the Christian world situation demands that leaders everywhere "re-think, re-state, re-interpret and apply the Christian message, and, where necessary revise plans and methods." To this task he will now devote all his powers.

Mottisms

Trust your hopes and not your fears.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all or not Lord at all.

Our best days lie ahead of us.

Dawn comes not twice to awaken man.

The secret of most highly multiplying leadership lies in preserving at all costs a life of transparent sincerity and reality.

The tasks the centuries might have done crowd the hours of setting sun.

This nation must be saved from crass materialism.

Your morning watch depends upon your resolutions of the night before.

The most pathetic sight which meets my gaze is that of Christian men distributing the bread of life with emaciated hands.

Thank God the distinctive mission of Christ is to liberate captives.

When a man lacks world conquering power it is because he has been conquered by the world.